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25 JUL 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
VIA: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT: Proposed Recall of Agency U-2C Aircraft

1. This memorandum suggests action on the part of the DCH; this action is contained in paragraph six.

2. The requirement to support SAC with J-75 powered U-2s was based on the possibility that the Cubans may have attempted intercept of the U-2 with the MIG-21. Subsequent analysis of all available information, including the [REDACTED] indicate that the MIG-21 has a very poor chance of making a successful intercept on a U-2A at mission altitude (67,000 feet or higher). In addition, when all other factors are considered, the mediocre quality of the Cuban GCI, the relatively inferior Cuban pilots, the excellent JCS Recall Program for the U-2 and the political overtones involved we feel that the SAC J-57 powered U-2 is a relatively adequate aircraft for Cuban coverage and enjoys essentially the same margin of safe conduct that the J-75 powered U-2 has had over Cuba.

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3. We feel that since we have now had an opportunity to better evaluate the MIG-21 threat in Cuba and the resulting estimate that the MIG-21 is extremely unlikely to perform a successful intercept against the U-2 at mission altitude that SAC can now start phasing the J-57 powered U-2 back into the Cuban reconnaissance program and alternately phase the Agency aircraft back to Edwards Air Force Base.

4. Colonel Steakley, of JRC, was approached on this subject and agreed that SAC could indeed commence employing the SAC U-2 again over Cuba and saw no reason why the J-75 powered U-2s could not be phased back to the Agency. He also stated that SAC themselves would prefer to employ their own aircraft on these missions since the SAC U-2 and systems are more compatible with SAC's operations plans.

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Handle via [REDACTED]
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5. At the present time the Agency has a total of [REDACTED] U-2 aircraft of which no more than [REDACTED] are available for operations. [REDACTED] aircraft are presently assigned to Barksdale Air Force Base. One of these is due for overhaul in the next few days and is to be supplanted with the remaining U-2 aircraft at Edwards. Thus the Agency will not have operationally ready aircraft until the week of 5 August. (This excludes the two aircraft in [REDACTED]) Depending on the extent of SAC operations over Cuba we then may have to send this aircraft to Barksdale within a few days of its being commissioned. The point here is that we cannot at this time provide an operationally ready aircraft in the U. S. to deploy overseas in an emergency without recalling an aircraft from SAC. Even then we are virtually unable to train the new pilot at Edwards, train the new SAC tanker refueling crews or maintain proficiency for our own pilots.

6. RECOMMENDATION:

That you approach Mr. McNamara on the subject and solicit his concurrence in phasing the SAC aircraft back into the Cuban reconnaissance program and alternately return the Agency's aircraft to Edwards.

Original signed by
E. B. Giller

EDWARD B. GILLER
Acting Deputy Director
(Research)

Signature recommended:

(Signed) Jack C. Ledford

AD/OSA

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